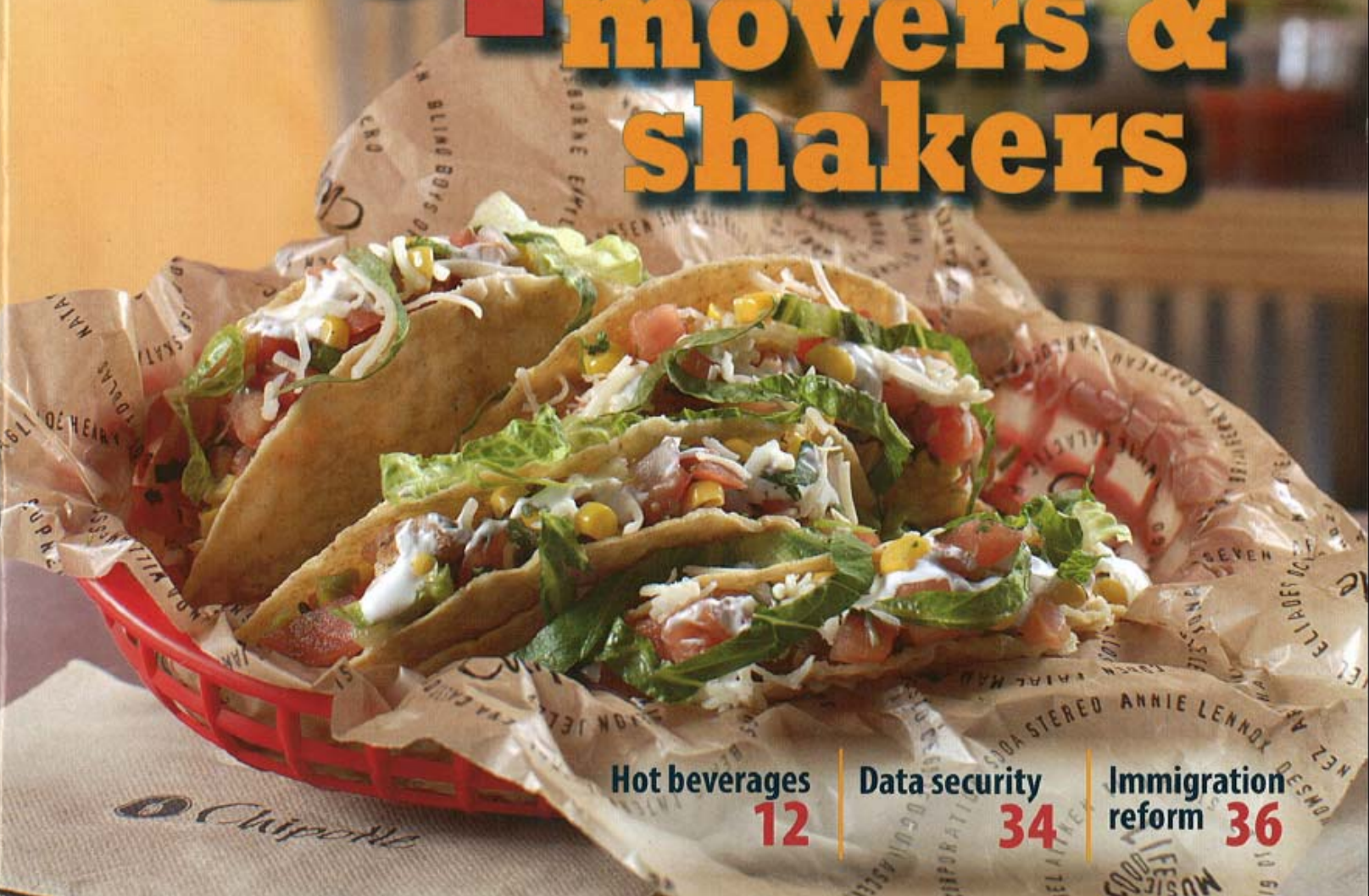


EAST CASUAL

IDEAS & TRENDS FOR THE FAST-CASUAL RESTAURANT

2007 Top 100 movers & shakers



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#7

Saladworks, Conshohocken, Pa.

If the fast-casual movement is all about healthier menus, it's no wonder Saladworks is among the front runners. (Of course, it was born in Philadelphia, ranked in one pole as 16th in the "most physically fit cities" category, which doesn't hurt.)

The idea of serving only salads at a mall food court has caught on in a big way. Reviewers are publishing glowing recommendations for the restaurant, which was founded by chef John Scardapane. "Only at Saladworks have I ever felt as good about paying as much for a salad as I would any other meal," wrote a reporter for the Mooresville, N.C., market.

Because franchisees can jump on board for as little as \$213,000 at a mall location, expect this chain to pop up in your neighborhood soon. Just don't call it a newbie. The chain first appeared as an independent in the Cherry Hills Mall 21 years ago, which makes it a fast-casual veteran even before Wall Street analysts coined the term.

— Julie Sturgeon



#8

Bruegger's, Burlington, Vt.

Brueggers Enterprises started in 2007 with 252 company-owned and franchised-stores, and ended the third quarter with 262 in 21 states. The bagel franchise also posted a 6.1 percent increase in sales for the third quarter, going from \$39.1 million in 3Q '06 to \$41.5 million in 3Q '07, marking 14 consecutive quarters of comp growth.

Franchisees have development commitments for nearly 110 new bakeries over the next few years, including a 20-unit commitment in southeastern Florida. New bakeries also debuted in North and South Carolina, and expansion is expected to continue in new markets across the country.

In addition to launching a new line of soups, Bruegger's branched out into the lucrative airport market in 2007, opening locations at Boston Logan International and Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International. And Bruegger's will open its first franchise bakery at Raleigh-Durham International airport in 2008.

"Airports are the natural evolution from a brand growth standpoint," said Bruegger's vice president of franchise development Chris Cheek. "Nontraditional locations are rapidly becoming hot commodities in the fast-casual market." — Richard Webster

#9

Moe's Southwest Grill, Atlanta

After guests are greeted with a hearty "Welcome to Moe's," they choose from burritos, tacos, quesadillas and fajitas with pop-culture names such as Joey Bag of Donuts, Close Talker and Funk Meister. Each one is customizable with a choice of meat or protein: fajita steak, chicken, ground beef, grilled fish or tofu.

FOCUS Brands bought Moe's from Raving Brands in August. Moe's — with more than 360 units across the country — joined four sister brands that bring in more than \$1 billion in system-wide revenue each year.

Embracing the online video culture, the chain hosted "Moe's Video Nation" contest to promote the "Burrito in every hand" campaign. A quartet of rappers, "Notorious M.O.E. and Nacho Daddy," secured the grand prize of burritos for life after receiving more than 11,000 views.

— MA



#10

Pinkberry, Los Angeles

Yogurt, smoothies and shaved ice for today's generation must come with techno rap theme songs, ghost chairs, pebble floors and hanging lamps over the tables. But youth marketing has paid off in a big way — even characters on ABC's "Ugly Betty" talk about eating at Pinkberry.

And its future looks even brighter. As a relative newcomer — Shelly Hwang and Young Lee established the company in January 2005 — the restaurant (now with about 32 locations in New York and L.A.) has built a regional Crackberry-like cult following strong enough to launch a dessert war. Folks in Los Angeles stand in lines snaking down the sidewalk just to get in their licks. And experts estimate that a single unit waits on more than 1,500 customers a day.

Pretty soon the country may have a chance to see what the commotion is all about — in 2007, the chain landed \$27.5 million from Starbucks founder Howard Schultz's venture capital fund to explore the concept nationwide. Just don't expect it to be marketed as frozen yogurt at this time — laboratory tests have determined the product doesn't contain enough active yogurt cultures to call itself yogurt by either the National Yogurt Association or California laws. — JS